AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend claims 1, 3, 7, 8, 13 and 14, cancel claims 2, 4, 5, 9-12 and 15, and add new claims 16-18, as follows.

Listing of Claims

1. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) An automotive instrument panel, comprising:

a substrate member defining the general shape of the instrument panel and having lateral end portions configured to confront respective portions of adjacent door panels of an automobile in which the instrument panel is to be used; and

a pliable cover layer disposed on said substrate member;

~~said substrate member together with~~ said cover layer defining resilient engagement areas proximate said lateral end portions of said substrate member which contact the adjacent door panels when the door panels are in closed positions;

wherein said cover layer includes free ends extending outwardly from said lateral end portions of said substrate member to define respective flexible flanges cantilevered from said substrate member and contacting the respective door panels in the closed positions.

2. (CANCELED)

3. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The instrument panel of claim [[2]] 1, wherein said cover layer deforms to accommodate the door panels in their closed positions.

4-5. (CANCELED)

6. (ORIGINAL) The instrument panel of claim 1, wherein said substrate member and said cover layer are formed from injection moldable polymers, and said pliable cover layer is molded over said substrate member.

7. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) An automotive interior trim assembly, comprising:

an instrument panel including a substrate member defining the general shape of the instrument panel and having opposed lateral ends, said instrument panel further including a pliable, first cover layer disposed on said substrate member and having free ends extending outwardly from said lateral ends of said substrate member to define respective flexible flanges cantilevered from said substrate member ~~cooperating with said substrate member to define resilient engagement areas proximate said lateral ends of said substrate member~~;

a door panel hingedly secured adjacent said instrument panel, proximate one of said lateral ends of said substrate member, for movement between open and closed positions; and

said door panel contacting said instrument panel at one of said ~~resilient engagement areas~~ flexible flanges when said door panel is in said closed position.

8. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The trim assembly of claim 7, wherein ~~said cover layer extends beyond said lateral ends of said substrate member to define respective flexible flanges in said resilient engagement areas,~~ said flexible flanges ~~deforming~~ deform to accommodate said door panel in said closed position.

9-12. (CANCELED)

13. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A method of finishing an interior of an automobile, comprising:

installing an instrument panel within the interior of the automobile between laterally opposed door panels of the automobile, the instrument panel including a rigid substrate member having lateral ends, and a pliable cover layer disposed over the substrate member, the ~~substrate member and~~ cover layer ~~together defining resilient engagement areas at lateral ends of the substrate member~~ including free ends extending outwardly from the lateral ends of the substrate member to define respective flexible flanges cantilevered from the substrate member;

contacting a door panel of the automobile with the instrument panel, adjacent a lateral end of the substrate member, when the door panel is in a closed

position; and

displacing part of the instrument panel to accommodate the door panel.

14. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The method of claim 13, ~~wherein the cover layer extends beyond the lateral ends of the substrate member to define respective lateral flanges, and~~ wherein displacing the instrument panel includes deforming the [[lateral]] flexible flanges.

15. (CANCELED)

16. (NEW) The instrument panel of claim 1, wherein said flexible flanges have angled distal ends for engaging the door panels.

17. (NEW) The instrument panel of claim 16, wherein said distal ends are angled such that the door panels contact side surfaces of said flanges in the closed positions.

18. (NEW) The instrument panel of claim 16, wherein said distal ends are angled such that the door panels contact end edges of said flanges in the closed positions.